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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

O God, our Father, we thank You for setting eternity in our hearts. You are the ultimate source of peace and knowledge, presiding over our universe with the majesty of Your power.

Today, we present ourselves to You with the humble request that You would move mightily in the hearts of our legislators. Lord, lead them toward the path of unity, empowering them to accomplish Your work on Earth.

God, we thank You for the freedoms that You have given us and ask that through our Senators these liberties will flourish. And, Lord, please bring an end to this partial government shutdown.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAWLEY). The majority leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, although three-quarters of the government is funded and fully operational, important Federal functions continue to be unduly affected, and hundreds of thousands of Federal workers have now missed paychecks.

By now, everyone in America understands the basic faultlines of this disagreement. The Speaker of the House has decided that opposing President Trump comes before the security of our borders.

The President has asked for a reasonable new investment, \$5.7 billion—about one-tenth of 1 percent of Federal spending—for the same kinds of border security that prominent Democrats actually used to brag about supporting, for the very same kind of reinforced steel fencing that the Obama administration bragged about building, and for precisely the kinds of barriers that the men and women of law enforcement there on the ground insist are vital for their mission.

It is for precisely the same kind of physical border security in which a number of my Democratic colleagues here in the Senate were perfectly happy to vote to invest billions of dollars just as recently as last Congress. The 2017 funding measure that passed the Senate with 47 Democratic votes included upgraded border fencing; that was in 2017, just this past Congress—last year. And 40 Democrats voted for the bipartisan spending deal that was cleared just this past March. It included more than \$1.5 billion for border barriers. Then, of course, the Appropriations subcommittee and full committee approved another \$1.6 billion for border security in a bipartisan vote just this last June, and 10 of 15 committee Democrats voted to report the final package to the full Senate. Those are billions of dollars for physical border security, winning Democratic votes just last year.

Well, that was before we had a new Speaker of the House. That was before Speaker PELOSI and her far-left base decided that the politics of obstruction would come before commonsense policymaking.

Here is how serious the Speaker is about ending the impasse and getting the government reopened: She now

proudly boasts that she would allow exactly \$1—\$1—for border barriers.

There was bipartisan support in the Congress for billions of dollars of physical barriers at the border before Representative PELOSI was Speaker. Now congressional Democrats support just \$1—\$1—for border barriers since she became Speaker. You have to ask yourself, what is the reason?

Earlier this month, Speaker PELOSI declared that the concept of any physical wall on our southern barrier was “an immorality”—an immorality.

“A wall is an immorality.” That is what Speaker PELOSI said. Look, that is not a serious statement. It would be laugh-out-loud material if hundreds of thousands of Federal workers weren’t going without pay because the Speaker has decided this absurdity is now her party’s official position.

Immoral? Was it immoral for Democrats to vote for the Secure Fence Act in 2006? Was it immoral for President Obama’s administration to proudly build the same kinds of steel slat barriers that President Trump now wants more of? Is Speaker PELOSI calling sitting Democrats immoral because they voted to invest billions in border security over the past few years alone?

I would like to see how this new philosophical opposition to the existence of walls plays out in practice. Shouldn’t the Speaker introduce a bill to destroy the walls and fencing that already exist if they are immoral?

Or maybe this actually isn’t a new, principled stand by Democrats. Maybe this is all one big political game—no negotiations, no collaboration. It is political game playing.

Consider the latest tactic by my Democratic colleagues. They have said that the President just needs to drop his request and agree to the Democrats’ plan to reopen the government, and then—and then—they will talk about border security—except they couldn’t even keep up that act either.

When President Trump and Speaker PELOSI met last week, the President

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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put the question to her directly: If the government were reopened, would Democrats, after 30 days, then compromise and agree to more border security?

No, no, said Speaker PELOSI. They would not.

So here we are, day 24, because the Speaker of the House has decided that enforcing our own laws is now immoral, because she has decided it is better to prolong this partial shutdown than invest \$1 in something that both parties agreed was a good idea until about 5 minutes ago—funding that Obama administration border experts continue to argue is a good idea, an essential idea.

Here in the Senate, I am sorry to say, my Democratic colleagues seem to have just fallen in line. Based on their actions, my colleagues across the aisle seem to agree that it is better for Federal workers to keep going without pay than to invest one one-thousandth of Federal spending in the same kinds of border security that they themselves have voted repeatedly to fund in just the past 2 years.

I have a hard time believing that every last one of my Senate Democratic colleagues really stands with Speaker PELOSI on this. It is hard to believe. It is hard to believe that Senate Democrats now agree their own recent votes on border security were actually immoral, that it would be better to keep the government shut down than to invest one one-thousandth of Federal spending in fencing that the Obama administration bragged about building.

It is particularly hard for me to believe that my distinguished colleagues from Maryland and Virginia, who are understandably very concerned with the circumstances of the Federal workforce, would rather echo Speaker PELOSI's fringe position—rather echo Speaker PELOSI's fringe position—than work with the White House to find a real compromise and reopen the government.

What is happening here is that Federal workers are paying for this far-left ideological crusade. Lots of American families are facing great uncertainty because Senate Democrats apparently agree that the same kinds of reasonable investments they happily supported last year and the year before have now become completely immoral this year simply because Speaker PELOSI suddenly now says that they are wrong.

That isn't really what has happened. That isn't what has happened. Enforcing our laws has not become unethical overnight. The physical barriers at the border that Democrats used to support in past Congresses and in the Obama administration have not somehow become radical rightwing positions.

Walls and fences still work. Border security still matters. American families still deserve safety. Reality is still reality. When Democrats are ready to reaccept these realities, they can nego-

tiate seriously with the White House and bring an end to this impasse.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

STRENGTHENING AMERICA'S SECURITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST ACT OF 2019—Motion to Proceed

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to S. 1.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion to proceed to S. 1.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to the consideration of S. 1, a bill to make improvements to certain defense and security assistance provisions and to authorize the appropriation of funds to Israel, to reauthorize the United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Act of 2015, and to halt the wholesale slaughter of the Syrian people, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, here we are, January 14. Twenty-four days ago, the border security funding and 25 percent of our government funding lapsed.

Democrats refuse to come to the negotiating table with a legitimate offer that would end this partial government shutdown and provide vital funding for border security measures. Their negligence has harmed 800,000 Federal workers who are not being paid while this standoff continues, and it has completely stalled the work here in the Senate because the minority leader, the Senator from New York, has gotten his colleagues to fall in line to block the legislation that is currently on the floor that would offer aid and comfort to our friends and allies in the Middle East, countries like Israel and Jordan. So it has completely stalled our work here in the Senate, as well, and, sadly, their efforts have sought to make border security more of a political football than the national security issue that it is.

What I find so cynical is the fact that Democrats have drawn a line in the sand over something they have largely supported in the past. For example, in 2006 we passed the Secure Fence Act.

This legislation called for more than 800 miles of fencing along the U.S.-Mexico border, and it authorized additional layered security that we keep discussing—things like vehicle barriers, sensor technology, cameras, and lighting. That bill passed by 80 to 19—80 to 19—exactly the same kind of border security measures we are talking about today and that Democrats have shut down 25 percent of the government over—80 to 19.

Barack Obama, CHUCK SCHUMER, and Hillary Clinton all supported the Secure Fence Act. Yet their opposition to President Trump and anything and everything that he wants has somehow become an article of faith for the radical left.

A few years later, in 2013, the Senate, with Democrats holding the majority, voted on the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, sometimes known as the Gang of 8 comprehensive immigration bill. That bill, among other things, provided funding for infrastructure—that is, barriers along the border—as well as personnel—the types of things we continue to advocate for today. In total, that bill appropriated \$46 billion for border security.

So the Democrats—Senator SCHUMER and Speaker PELOSI—have shut down the government over \$5 billion that the President has requested for border security. Yet 54 Democrats—every single one, in 2013—voted for \$46 billion for border security.

Well, today, they turn their nose up at the President's request for \$5.7 billion, and it makes no sense whatsoever unless you look through the lens of partisan political gamesmanship, because rational actors, reasonable people trying to find a solution, could easily come up with a solution based on this history. It wouldn't take 24 days. It wouldn't take 24 hours—maybe 24 minutes—to come up with a bipartisan, bicameral solution that the President would sign.

So what are we talking about?

Well, we are talking about the same thing we talked about back in 2006 and in 2013. We are talking about infrastructure. The President likes to call it a wall. Other people call it a fence. But it includes things like vehicle barriers along the Arizona-Mexico border. This is exactly the sort of things we talked about and voted for in 2006 and 2013. The majority of Democrats supported those measures in the past. Yet today they seem proud of what they have wrought, which is that one-quarter of our Federal Government is being held hostage over the same exact measures.

Their continued intransigence and refusal to get serious about negotiating shows one of two things: either their party has completely flipped their position on commonsense border security measures or they simply refuse to work with the President because they loathe him. Either way, they should be ashamed, they should be embarrassed, but they are not.